AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the third paragraph on page 1 with the following paragraph:

Fluorosteroids~~Fluorstereoids~~ represent useful antiinflammatory compounds and it is known that stereoisomers have different pharmacological efficiencies. It is also known that 6α-fluoropregnane derivatives have in general a higher efficiency than corresponding 6β-fluoro analogues. Several processes have been developed for obtaining 6α-fluoropregnanes, but all these processes suffer from poor stereoselectivity. There is a need for a process giving a higher ratio of 6α- to 6β-stereoisomers for a more economic industrial-scale manufacture.

Please replace the last paragraph on page 4 with the following paragraph:

Preferred substituents for R_1 as phenyl are fluorine, chlorine, hydroxy, dimethylamino, methyl, ethyl, methoxy, ethoxy and methoxycarbonyl. Examples for substituted phenyl are 4-flurophenyl, 2,4-difluorophenyl, 2,4,6-trifluorophenyl, 4-chlorophenyl, 2,4-dichlorophenyl, 2- or 4-hydroxyphenyl, 4-methylphenyl, 4-ethylphenyl, 2,4-dimethylphenyl, 2,4-diethylphenyl, 2,4,6-trimethylphenyl, 4-methoxyphenyl, 4-ethoxyphenyl, 2,4-dimethoxyphenyl, 2,4-diethoxyphenyl, 2,4,6-trimethoxyphenyl, 2-methyl-4-fluorophenyl, 2-methyl-4-chlorophenyl~~2-methyl-4chlorophenyl~~, 2- or 3- or 4-methoxycarbonylphenyl.

Please replace the second paragraph on page 5 with the following paragraph:

Suitable electrophilic fluorination agents are well known in the art and, in part, commercially available. These compounds include ~~can~~ for example N-fluorosulfonamides, N-fluoropyridinium salts, N-fluorobis(trifluoromethanesulfonyl)imides, N-alkyl-N'-fluoro-1,4-diazoniabicyclo[2.2.2]-octane salts, N-fluoro-N'-hydroxy-1,4-diazoniabicyclo[2.2.2]octane salts, and perchloryl fluoride.

Please replace the second paragraph on page 6 with the following paragraph:

The N-atoms of the amine may be substituted with C_1-C_{12}alkyl, preferably C_1-C_6alkyl and most preferably C_1-C_4alkyl, C_3-C_8cycloalkyl, preferably C_5-C_6cycloalkyl, C_4-C_{10}heterocycloalkyl, preferably C_4-C_8heterocycloalkyl, C_6-C_{10}aryl, C_7-C_{10}aralkyl, C_5-C_{10}heteroaryl or C_5-C_{10}heteroaralkyl. The N-atom of the amines can be part of an aliphatic or aromatic mono-cyclic or polycyclic aliphatic or aromatic ring (cyclic amines) and said N-atoms can be substituted with one residue as mentioned above. Alkyl groups at the N-atoms may be substituted, for example with C_3-C_8cycloalkyl, C_4-C_{10}heterocycloalkyl, C_1-C_6alkyl, C_1-C_6alkoxy or hydroxyl,[[.]] cycloalkyl, heterocycloalkyl, aryl,

heteroaryl, aralkyl and heteroaralkyl as well as rings of cyclic amines can be substituted for example with C_1-C_6alkyl, C_1-C_6alkoxy or hydroxyl.

Please replace the last paragraph on page 8 with the following paragraph:

The process of the invention may be carried out by dissolving or suspending compounds of formula II in a suitable solvent and cooling the solution to temperatures below 20°C and preferably about 10°C. The amine salt, or approximately equivalent amounts of an amine and a strong acid, are then added, followed by the addition of the electrophilic fluorination agent. The fluorination is an exothermal reaction and care must be taken at this stage that the temperature does not exceed values which would effect and degrade compounds of formulae I and II. The fluorination agent is added preferably drop-wise or in portions and the reaction mixture is preferably cooled during this operation. The reaction mixture is stirred after the addition of the fluorination agent and the temperature may be increased to ambient values, preferably room temperature. The reaction progress can be controlled by the chromatographic determination of the starting material of formula I. The reaction is terminated when presence of the starting material can no longer be detected. The reaction time may be from 0.5 to 8 hours. The desired compounds of formula II can be isolated from the reaction mixture in known manner, for example in removing the solvent and filtering or extracting the resulting suspension, followed by re-crystallisation from a suitable solvent, for example from an alkanol.

Please replace the second paragraph on page 10 with the following paragraph:

Example A1: Preparation of 9β,11β-epoxy-16β-methyl-3,17,21-trihydroxy-pregna-1,3,5-triene-20-one-21-acetate-3-benzoate~~9β,11-epoxy-16α-methyl-3,17,21-trihydroxy-pregna-1,3,5-triene-20-one-21-acetate-3-benzoate~~